



Citizens  
Coalition for  
Equal Access



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My name is Gary Gross, and I am the Co-Chair of The Citizens Coalition For Equal Access, (CC=A). We are a grass roots advocacy group that grew out of the work of the Farmington Human Relations Commission to make sure that the redevelopment of Unionville Center would result in an extremely accessible environment for the unusually high number of Farmington residents with disabilities. Since its formation in 2008, CC=A has successfully advocated for the installation of automatic doors in both Farmington branches of the U.S. Post Office and has presented educational offerings to members of the Farmington community, including the Town Council, the Police Department, and the Planning & Zoning Commission.

I am a disability advocate for the following reason. I have been disabled all my life for 62 years, and what I have found is that there is a lack of understanding and a lack of funding for accessibility issues, no matter what times we are in. In both good times and bad, in both Republican and Democratic administrations, the needs of people with disabilities are never a priority.

I urge the Committee to make sure that there is enough funding to carry out whatever recommendations come out of the study contemplated by S.B. 521.



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My name is Ruth Grobe, and I am Secretary of The Citizens Coalition For Equal Access and Chair of the Farmington Human Relations Commission. The Citizens Coalition has prepared a background paper that describes the large and pressing issues that have a bearing on S.B. 521, and I have copies for all of you.

In working with Farmington town government and experiencing the daily travails of disabled people, I now realize how ignorant I was previously and how little the vast majority of abled people understand about disability issues, including many of the officials in charge of carrying out ADA requirements.

S. B. 521 has great intentions, but it needs to be better coordinated with two other initiatives: the State ADA Self-Evaluations that will presently be conducted by the Department of Administrative Services and H.B. 5353, "An Act Requiring State Buildings To Be Accessible To Persons With A Disability," submitted by Representative Mike Demicco and Senator Beth Bye. We would urge your Committee to work with Commissioner DeFronzo and with the sponsors of H.B. 5353 to come up with amended wording for S.B. 521 to ensure two outcomes: first, that the State ADA Self-Evaluations and Transition Plans result in concrete accessibility upgrades that have been well vetted by people who are actually disabled and second, that the upgrades include buildings used by the judicial and legislative branches in addition to those used by the executive branch.

Since the original version of the ADA was passed in 1990, we have not done a good job of realizing its promise of equality for all citizens with disabilities. As our population ages and more and more people are faced with physical impairments, the issue becomes all the more pressing. This time around, we need to get it right. Please read the Citizens Coalition background paper, and please make every effort to learn more about the daily struggle of people with disabilities and the societal accommodations that could transform the struggle into triumph.